

hot sauce in his desk drawer. After the 116 Club, the Szechuan Pavilion was one of his favorite restaurants. The second involves his friend, great friend Mike "Mad Dog" Madigan, who served with him on the Watergate Committee.

The story goes that one time in Manhattan, NY, of all places in the apartment of Fidel Castro's mistress, in the course of casual conversation, Mike Madigan said something that upset Ms. Marita, something she took as a challenge to her own personal integrity. She pulled a Derringer from her brassiere and threatened to shoot them both. It was a tense moment. Mike tried to dive under the couch over against the wall. Fortunately, Mike and Howard got out of there unharmed and with a great story to tell.

We all greatly admired Howard. When I became majority leader, I called him on a very late cold December night and asked him to be my chief of staff, and to my great, good, wonderful fortune, he said yes, and he brought incredible insight and judgment. Through his personal leadership, integrity, and generosity, he inspired us all.

He valued character. He valued honesty. He valued grace. Above all, he valued faith. Howard was loved and respected by individuals across the Capitol complex from Members to doorkeepers to photographers to the hundreds of Senate staffers, old and young, Democrat and Republican. Howard was a remarkable person who led a remarkable life.

Howard used to sign off his e-mails with the words "all good wishes." I know I speak for the entire Senate family when I say our hearts are full of good wishes for Howard and his family. We are blessed to have had him in our lives, and we will miss him dearly.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before the distinguished Republican leader leaves the Senate floor, I wish to express to him through the Chair my appreciation for the kind and very thoughtful words about our friend Howard.

Howard Liebengood represents what the Senate is all about. Spread throughout the Senate, we have hundreds of people who work for us every day who are just like him, extremely well educated. If their goal in life was to see how much money they could make, they would not be working here. They do it because they have a sense of public service, as indicated with his record.

The Senator's kind words about Howard today are words that can be directed to each one of the people who work for us. He was what the Senate is all about. He not only should be but is a role model for what the Senate staffers, as we call them, try to be. If they completed their term of service having given up the fruits of how much money they could make outside the Senate and were thought of as Howard was thought of, I believe their lives would be complete.

I thank the leader very much. As I said, his remarks not only spoke of a

good man but are representative of what the Senate is all about.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full time in morning business for the majority and minority be given. The standing order was that we would go to the Gutierrez nomination at 3, but I ask that that time be extended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

INTRODUCTION OF REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP AMENDMENTS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we honor the tradition of defining our party's agenda for this Congress. I take this duty seriously. Because I take our times seriously.

We live during an extraordinary moment not only in the history of America, but in the history of the world. And it is my goal—and the goal of my caucus—to look to the future and seize the opportunities that such times offer.

Social Security has been one of the great triumphs in the history of our government. It has lifted millions of seniors from poverty into dignity and provided an essential safety net for disabled citizens.

But soon our Social Security system will be unable to sustain itself. A program created for security will itself become insecure.

Social Security works well for those at or near retirement. And, for these men and women, Social Security must remain the same and provide the same benefits.

But for future retirees, the future is less certain. That is, of course, if we fail to act. Then we will know the outcome: the retirement of the baby boom generation will place an unsustainable burden on younger Americans.

The President is right to call on the Congress to rise to this crisis. I believe we have an opportunity to rise above partisanship, to do what is right rather than what is expedient, and to leave a legacy of leadership for our children.

This Congress will continue to meet the challenge of our generation, to fight and win the war on terror.

I would like to thank Chairman COLLINS for her tremendous leadership last Congress. She successfully completed the first major overhaul of our intelligence services in a generation.

We will continue to look to her as she undertakes the important task of ensuring that we commit our resources where the threat is greatest.

Today, we will introduce legislation that honors our service men and women who have made the supreme sacrifice. They have given all to our Nation and the cause liberty; and we will give more to better care for the ones they loved.

I'm grateful for the hard work of many Senators in this effort, particu-

larly that of Senators SESSIONS, HAGEL, DEWINE, ALLEN, and our two able chairmen, Senators WARNER and CRAIG.

I look forward to their continued contributions on behalf of the members of our armed services.

This bill will also enhance our efforts to secure our Nation against biological threats and gives law enforcement the tools they need to better defend us at home, both by more quickly providing cutting edge technologies and by enhancing laws to protect our citizens. I appreciate Senator SESSIONS' leadership in the area of protecting our mass transit system against terrorist attacks. Included in this leadership proposal is the Railroad Carriers and Mass Transportation Act, a bill he authored last Congress and also incorporated into the Tools to Fight Terrorism Act introduced by Senate leadership.

Our Nation's security does not rest on our military might alone. A growing economy, educational opportunities, and access to affordable health care are all essential to keep our country strong and our citizens secure.

We should begin by examining the Federal Tax Code. Our tax system should raise revenue in a simple, efficient, fair and predictable manner.

Unfortunately, this is far from today's reality.

Consider the facts: Everyday Americans spend 23 percent more time filling out tax forms today than 8 years ago. In that time, the total number of pages of Federal tax rules have grown by almost half. And one leading tax preparation firm is making 150 percent more money.

We look forward to reviewing the findings of the President's Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform. We will take action. We will simplify our laws, keep our commitment to a progressive Tax Code, and promote savings and growth.

Clearly, adopting a comprehensive energy policy and reforming our tort system are cornerstones of economic growth. I believe that we have a real opportunity to work across party lines on these issues.

Chairman DOMENICI has renewed his efforts to bring a bill through the Energy Committee and we look forward to results. The Senate will soon begin its debate on class action reform. It is an important place to start. Our tort system costs our economy nearly \$250 billion per year. That's the equivalent of an \$844 "tort tax" on every American. This bill will be an early success. I'm grateful for the hard work on both sides of the aisle that have gone into this important initiative.

We cannot afford to let lingering concerns about a tax increase on small businesses stall our economic growth.

The President's economic stimulus package was exactly the right medicine at the right time for a faltering economy. From day one it has led to steady growth. We need to make those tax cuts permanent so we can keep our economy growing and creating jobs.

Critical to our long-term competitiveness is an educated and skilled workforce. Chairman ENZI will introduce legislation today grounded in essential core principles.

We will improve our Federal education and training programs by setting high expectations and raising achievement for all students. We will demand accountability for results. And we will support learning opportunities for students at all stages in life.

It is time that health care followed the rest of our economy and join the Information Age of the 21st century.

Our health care system is a model of spectacular inefficiencies: high and rapidly rising health care costs, growing ranks of the uninsured, chasms in quality and health care disparities.

In order to transform this system, we must agree on a guiding principle: all Americans deserve the security of lifelong, affordable access to high-quality health care.

The focus of a 21st century health care system must be the patient. The system must also be responsive primarily to the consumer, rather than third-party payers. In a transformed system, we must reestablish the doctor-patient relationship, and utilize technology to promote efficiency and provide care.

I am pleased that we will be introducing legislation that begins to build on these principles, utilizing the work of Senator GREGG and the Republican Task Force on the Uninsured. We will address rising costs, increase coverage and expand access to care.

We are also a Nation that values community, family, and compassion. We will work to build on the success of our welfare laws which have helped over 7 million people move from dependency to the dignity of work.

But in doing so, we will recognize the need to support those who do the hard work of compassion—caring for those in need. Our tax proposals will support these private efforts while also helping those who are raising children and ending the discrimination against marriage in the law.

We will also continue our efforts to promote and defend marriage, and to support parents as they seek to guide their children in difficult times. Today, Senator ALLARD will introduce the marriage protection amendment which I hope will be sent to the States for ratification.

Last Thursday, we had the opportunity to celebrate the enduring value of a free people exercising their right to self-governance. But with each new political beginning, we have the responsibility to answer to the people we serve. I believe that we have such an opportunity, and I have great faith in my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to dutifully answer that call.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

INTRODUCING DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP BILLS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the beginning of each session of Congress, the majority and minority introduce their bills. The first 10 bills are those of the majority. That is the tradition of the Senate. The distinguished Republican leader has worked hard, as have I, putting forward the bills that represent the majority. I have worked hard putting forward the bills that represent the minority, and I with Senator DURBIN, Senator STABENOW, and Senator SCHUMER today in the Lyndon Johnson Room presented our bills to the public.

The promise of America is a simple one. It is a promise that says if one works hard and plays by the rules, they can build a stronger, brighter future for themselves and their family. This promise has lived on for generations in this great country of ours. It is one that I have lived personally.

As a result of hard work and the generosity of people who helped me with my education, I received a good education, and in the process many doors were opened. After completing my education, I was able to go into business and now have what I believe is the best job in the world—a Member of the Senate representing the people of the State of Nevada.

My story is not unique. As many know, I was born and raised in Searchlight. Searchlight represents many places throughout this country. It represents countless individuals whose lives have been blessed, as mine has. I am sorry to say that these stories about a young boy or girl from a place like Searchlight are becoming fewer and fewer. We now have crumbling schools. The average school in America is 50 years old. We have schools such as those in the southern Nevada area, the Las Vegas area, that are being built at a rapid pace. As many as 18 in 1 year have to be dedicated to keep up with the growth of Las Vegas. The superintendent of public education has become a superintendent of public construction. School districts need help with their schools, in inner cities and in rural communities.

Good-paying jobs are giving way to jobs that, no matter how hard one works, just don't pay the bills. There are 45 million people without health care. That means there are too many Americans who are not getting the care they need to live healthy and prosperous lives.

This is the America we live in today, a country whose founding promise is slipping further away from reality for far too many American families, a country where a kid like me from Searchlight finds it harder to get ahead, despite the generosity of people in the community, the good will of teachers, and a work ethic, which is important.

Why do we find ourselves in this state today? Why is the promise of America, the promise that led me and others to this great Chamber, not still

alive and well for all of us? In part, it is because we have a Government that simply does not live up to the values upon which the promise was made. We have leaders whose poor planning and mismanagement have sent young men and women into battle overseas, some say without the equipment and support they deserve to succeed in the battlefield.

Some way, and I certainly underscore this, there was a plan to win the war but not a plan to win the peace. We have a Government that by any measure fails to do all it can to make our country safe and secure. We have leaders who love to create crises when they do not exist, such as Social Security, which will be funded for many decades into the future, some say as far as the year 2055.

Some say there is a crisis with judges. This morning someone asked: What happens if you do to President Bush this next 4 years what you did the first 4? I say, well, he should jump with joy. That would mean 408 judges he would get approved and 20 disapproved.

The Constitution has in it a clause that deals with advise and consent. If the oath I took just a few weeks ago to uphold the Constitution means anything, certainly that part of the oath that says I must live up to the Constitution, it says the Senate of the United States has an obligation, legal in nature, to give advice and consent to the President of his nominations. I will continue to do that. I believe that is a role we have.

There are real crises. I have talked about some of them. I talked about others: education, health care, the environment that we do not talk about much anymore. Energy is a crisis we have in this country. The staggering deficit we have developed these past 4 years is a crisis. I believe there are real crises that are crippling our economy, hurting the large and small businesses, and pricing too many families out of quality health care. That is what our legislation we introduce today deals with. We have a Government that has forgotten who it is responsible to, one that has become content with feeding tens of billions to the special interests while failing in its commitment to tens of millions of seniors.

America's promise will not stay alive if America's Government betrays it, and that is why at the outset of this Congress Senate Democrats are committed to restoring the promise of America by pursuing an agenda that honors the values behind it, the values of security, opportunity, and responsibility. These values are at the core of America's promise.

The ten Democratic bills which I will introduce today deal first with America's security. For example, we need to work to increase our Special Operations Forces by 2,000 individuals. We need to expand the pace and scope of programs to eliminate and safeguard nuclear materials and enhance efforts to prevent radioactive and other deadly